

Historic, Archive Document

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Ag84Pro





Look into the kitchens of most Americans and you will find a rich variety of wholesome, affordable foods, such as these fresh vegetables and fruits. (USDA 79CS0754)

USA and the USDA — the Early Years

Americans today live in the land of abundant, affordable, nutritious food.

When the country was founded more than two centuries ago, most Americans were farmers. Nine out of 10 people lived on farms. Families stuck their roots down deep into the land; they owned it; they worked it. They made soap, candles, and clothing; grew their own spices and gardens; cut their own wood; built their own homes; dug their own wells; trained their

own oxen; hoed their own crops; canned their own fruits and vegetables; and were self-reliant.

A century later, in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln created the United States Department of Agriculture, to develop the best seeds and send the most helpful agricultural information to all farmers.

A farmer in Lincoln's time produced enough to supply himself and three or four other people.



From the historical USDA photography collection, three farmers harvesting grain with scythes. (USDA BW03)

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(USDA
92CS0689-4)*



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Four wheat combines at sunset. (USDA 92CS0540)

Pitting creature against creature: Ladybugs feast on destructive aphids, a sound practice of biological pest control. (USDS 92CS0523)



USDA in the 1990's

Today, one American farmer supplies nearly 130 people, worldwide, with their food and fiber needs.

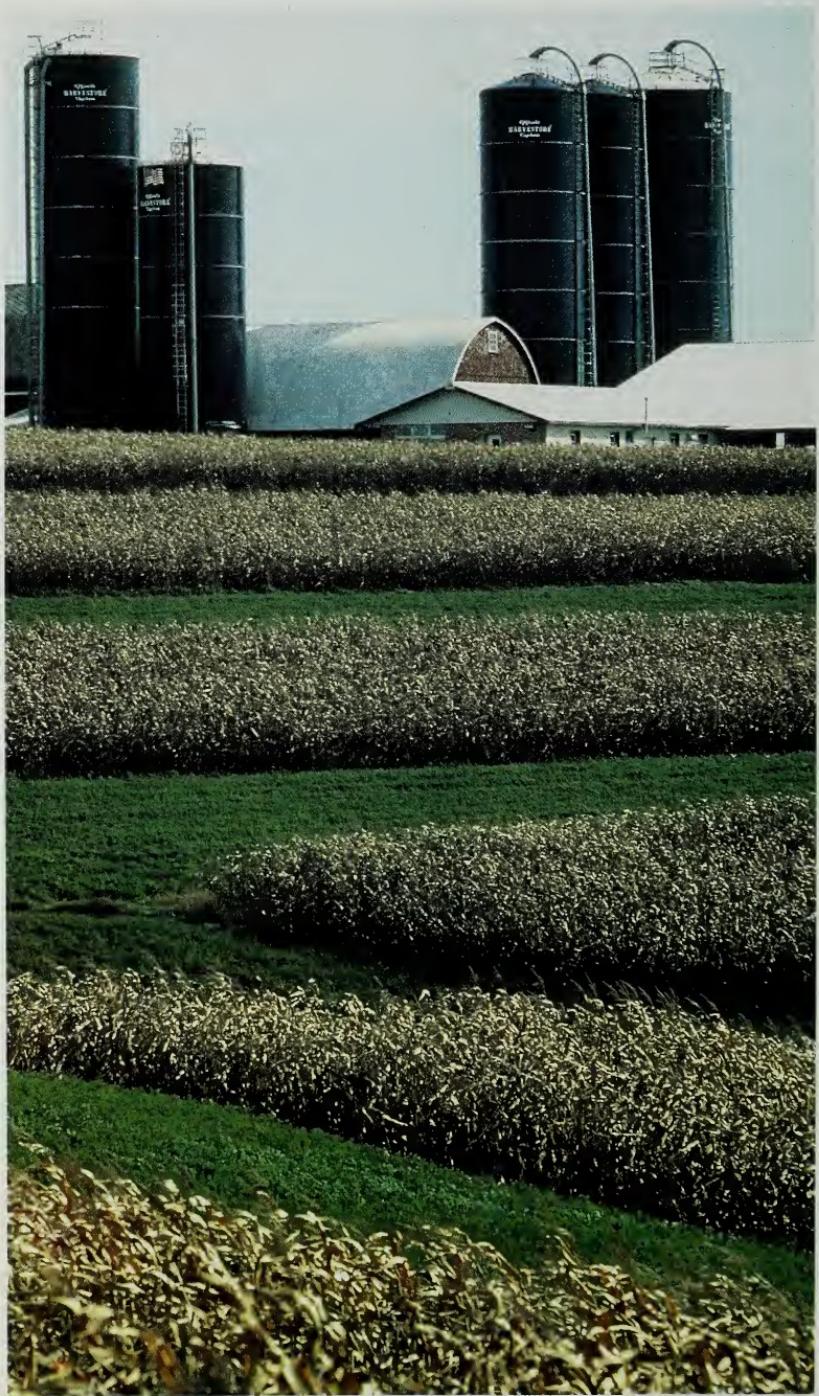
The USDA is a multi-purpose agency. The Department's 100,000 employees make sure the food you eat is safe and nutritious; distribute food stamps and school lunches; provide research and education; promote exports; inspect poultry and seafoods; help save energy, soil, water, and wildlife; take care of our national forests; and lend money to farmers across America.

Little did President Lincoln realize that the USDA would grow from a provider of seedcorn and pamphlets to an inventor of wash-and-

wear clothing, fuel from corn, a "deicer" for slippery roads, and the use of plants to cure cancer.

The USDA budget is the fourth-largest in U.S. Government. In fact, the budgets of only 17 foreign nations exceed it. USDA would rank fourth among U.S. corporations — smaller than General Motors, Exxon, or Ford, but larger than IBM, Mobil, or General Electric. Its credit and lending services equal those of the Nation's largest banks.

As of 1992, women are the fastest-growing group of employees at USDA, representing 40 percent of the work force. Minorities account for another 17 percent.



Good farming is good business: Strip cropping lessens erosion and protects the land. (USDA 92CS0310)



Crates of freshly harvested oranges ready to be hauled to the packing plant in Visalia, CA. (USDA 77CS0409)

Agriculture today is America's number one industry — just as it was when President Lincoln created the USDA. But today, that industry provides jobs for 21 million Americans. Agricultural workers produce food and process it into your morning cereal, your barbecued chicken, and your fastfood pizza. Agricultural workers help process raw materials used in making wood shingles for your house, stretch fabric for your jogging outfit, milkweed "down" for your winter jacket, and the floor mats for your family car.

Farmworkers move their products around the country and around the world. This makes America the largest exporter of agricultural products. The result by the mid-1990's? More than \$40 billion in exports, for an \$18-billion positive trade balance. In turn, these farm exports generate a million American jobs.

American agriculture is one of the world's largest commercial industries, with assets of nearly \$1 trillion. And USDA is keeping up with the agriculture industry in research, development, and innovation, helping take food and fiber to the most people at the least cost.

HOW USDA IS WORKING FOR YOU

Eating Hearty, Keeping Healthy

We are lucky to live in a country with safe, bountiful food. But for the people who need help to pay for the food they buy, the USDA provides food stamps to buy food at the neighborhood store. For schoolchildren, the elderly, new mothers, and others, the USDA provides everything from milk, cereal, fruit, bread, meat, and vegetables, to wholesome, hot meals.

More than 50 million of us get food help from the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA. Not many people know that more than one-half of the entire USDA budget goes to provide food stamps and nutritious meals to single parents and their

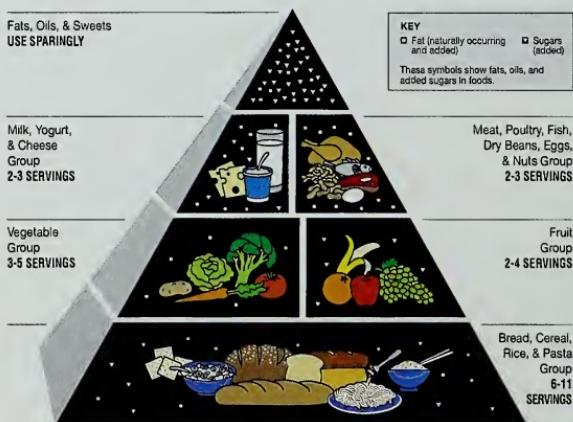


For people concerned about family nutrition, the USDA develops recipes like this Manhattan Chicken Chowder, containing less fat, sugar, and salt than similar recipes in standard cookbooks. (USDA 82CS0555)

babies and toddlers, the elderly, schoolchildren, and disadvantaged people.

Have you seen the new "Food Guide Pyramid?" This is a drawing that shows us the healthiest foods to eat. The colorful pyramid was created by the Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service.

Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Across the country the Food Guide Pyramid has become a new learning aid for schoolchildren. (USDA 92CS0317)



*Agricultural Marketing Service
inspector checks quality of poultry.
(USDA 92CS0458)*

Besides teaching us how to make wise food choices, the job of HNIS is to check the foods we buy for wholesomeness, and publicize nutrition breakthroughs.

Consumers have their own office at the Department of Agriculture. Employees of the Office of the Consumer Advisor tell us how agricultural practices affect our environment and the food supply. When companies put a label on your can of soup, these workers make sure the label is telling the truth.

Getting Safe Food to Market

It's the American way: Producers of many crops control their own marketing businesses that bring farm products to consumers. At the same time, Agriculture Department employees work with farmers and farm organizations to make them more effective and profitable.

Here's a rundown of several USDA marketing and inspection services:

USDA agents inspect animals and fowl before and after slaughter, from hoof and claw to stewpot, thence to the can or the frozen package. Examiners also check on how other countries inspect their meat or poultry products for sale in the United States.



Harvesting wheat. American farmers produce 10 percent of the world's wheat and export billions of dollars of wheat to our friends overseas each year.
(USDA 92CS0541)

Protecting our amber waves of grain for baking bread or toasting cereals is the job of the Agriculture Department's Federal Grain Inspection Service. Workers at this agency establish the standards in grains we grow for domestic sale and for those grains we sell overseas.

USDA agriculture inspectors are in the front lines in fighting the Mediterranean fruit fly, gypsy moths, and similar threats to major food crops and products.

Officials of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service ensure humane treatment of animals and test the medicines that veterinarians use for horses, dogs, and other animals.



APHIS veterinarians in the field inspect animals for proper treatment and care.
(USDA 92CS0589)

*A portrait of two hogs.
Americans today consume
nearly 64 lbs. of pork per
capita each year,
compared to 62.3 lbs. in
1910. (USDA 78C0289)*

Summertime picnics, Thanksgiving, and Christmas often cause a surge of foodborne illness, and USDA can help your family keep healthy. Do you have a cooking or food storage problem? Want to know if it's safe to roast that re-frozen holiday turkey? Help is at your fingertips with a toll-free telephone call to the Meat and Poultry Hotline —1-800-535-4555.

USDA helps farmers start cooperatives. Cooperatives have lower costs; they improve the quality of the farm products that are part of our standard of living. If one grape grower, for example, can't afford a harvester, he or she can join up with other grape growers, form a business "club," and share the needed equipment and the latest soil and water and pest eradication information from USDA.



If Farming Is Your Business...Here's Help

Just as the President has his own Council of Economic Advisors, farmers can count on their own USDA professional economists who report on the supply of and demand for hundreds of farm products.

USDA economists and statisticians gather information to advise the business farmer and to help growers decide what crops to plant and harvest and which livestock to raise — and how much of each.



*Corn,
awaiting
harvest
near
Urbana, IL,
frames a
grain
elevator and
railway
cars.
(USDA
73CS0234)*



Minimum tillage helps protect Mother Earth through soil conservation. New soybean crop emerges through wheat stubble left behind from previous crop. (USDA 75CS0536)

The economists also research agricultural production and marketing and report on how farming techniques affect rural communities and our natural resources.

The Office of Energy works with farmers and ranchers, Members of Congress, consumers, and industry to clean up the air and develop a "green" national energy plan.

Everybody talks about the weather, but the World Agricultural Outlook Board actually does something about it. This agency keeps a sharp eye on the weather's impact on world crops, on global climate changes, and on the satellites that improve forecasts.

Protecting Mother Earth

Through the Department of Agriculture, farmers play a large role in conserving and controlling our environment.

To take one example, USDA's Smokey Bear urges all of us to prevent forest fires. Smokey is the well-loved national symbol of the fire prevention program of the USDA Forest Service. In 1994, his 50th birthday will be celebrated near Capitan, New Mexico, with a parade, a hot-air balloon, and a large birthday cake.



Heading Smokey, Forest Service lookouts watch for forest fires in the millions of acres owned by the Federal Government. Rangers and firefighters battle the fires that do break out.

The Forest Service Smokey Bear campaign has proven to be a way of educating children and adults alike about the need to prevent forest fires. (USDA 92CS0586 or 87)

Deciduous Forest. Birch trees in National Forest, part of America's natural diversity. (USDA 89CS1046)



Through the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, USDA protects the natural resources so loved by American families for their recreational camping, hiking, picnicing, and fishing and swimming. The USDA also helps out in times of natural disaster, and looks ahead to prevent misuse of our fields, forests, and streams.

Coniferous Forest. The National Forest System serves Americans' needs for recreation as well as timber. (USDA 92CS0588)





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For instance, Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service specialists help to control flash floods in Mississippi; to show farmers how to conserve topsoil for crops (averting pollution of creeks and rivers); to restore prairies in Illinois to bring back rare plants and butterflies; to develop timber management plans for diversity and beauty in Arkansas and Oklahoma; to shape streams and ponds in Alaska to improve fish habitat; and to improve forests for the recovery of the grizzly bear in Montana.

This Land Is Your Land — and the USDA Takes Care of It

Who owns the land in America? Nearly 60 percent belongs to private owners. You — that is, the U.S. Government — own 32 percent, about 8 percent is owned by State and local governments, and 2 percent belongs to Native Americans.

Soil Conservation Service watershed projects help preserve and enhance the environment. (USDA 92CS0556)



In thousands of ways — in forest, field, and stream, the USDA has major responsibilities for preserving our environment. All across the country, the USDA works with farmers to preserve the land.

Spreading Discoveries Through Science and Education

USDA science and education professionals work to help farmers predict and solve problems.

Collecting and counting insects from a measured field, or testing soil samples for nutrients, farmers can use computer modeling to decide when to spray or when to apply fertilizer, for example. Several agencies, working with universities, industry, and farmers, have developed models for more targeted, selective use of pesticides and fertilizers.

USDA laboratories are today creating new inks from soybeans; plastics and fuels from corn; and newsprint from the fiber plant called kenaf.



Agricultural Research Service chemist Sevim Erhan prepares soy-based printing inks for laboratory tests. (USDA 92CS0526)

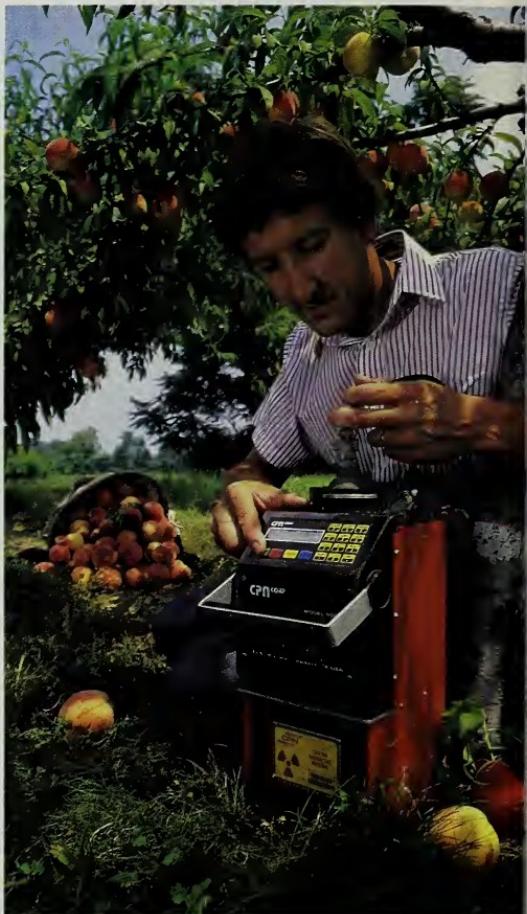
*Agricultural Research Service scientist monitors soil moisture in fruit orchard.
(USDA 92CS0525)*

Cars today are running on "gasoline" from farm crops. An auto fuel from corn and other U.S. crops is a realistic hope for cutting our dependence on foreign oil.

Developing such homegrown products is what USDA researchers work on year-round. The Agricultural Research Service helped create a de-icer made from cornstarch, replacing road-damaging salt; a "Super-Slurper" that absorbs huge amounts of water and other liquids — already used in disposable diapers, hospital pads, and kitty litter; a plastic gel for cooling wine bottles; and for soil, pellets that retain water for a farmer's "back 40" or for the climbing roses in your front yard garden.

Chocolate is Americans' favorite flavor; all cacao beans come from overseas. ARS researchers are studying ways to keep the cacao tree healthy, and make its bean more "chocolatey." With "stronger" chocolate taste, fewer beans will be needed. This could cut back on the high cost of imports. We import \$1 billion worth of the beans and buy more than \$8 billion of finished chocolate products per year.

The Department of Agriculture pays for research by young people and seasoned scientists at colleges and universities, including the 1890 land-grant colleges, throughout the United States. At Tuskegee University, a USDA-supported institution, George Washington Carver turned the peanut and the sweetpotato into agricultural gold.



Extension Service employees and volunteers in every U.S. county work on international marketing techniques, youth at risk, waste management, and water quality. Staff use computers, videos, and satellites to deliver their educational agricultural programs.

You're welcome to visit the largest agricultural library in the world, the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, MD (near the USDA headquarters in Washington, DC). Or you can tap into the library's 2 million volumes through its computerized network or electronic bulletin board.



Students at land-grant universities study greenhouse specimens.
(USDA CSRS #13 May90 RO2)

Barnraising, a tradition in American agriculture. The Farmers Home Administration lends farmers money for new homes and barns. (USDA FmHA # 49)



How USDA Workers Can Help Farming Towns

Are you a farmer who can't get a loan to buy a house or a family farm? The Farmers Home Administration can help you get a mortgage.

After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, hundreds of disaster-struck farmers and producers in Florida and Louisiana turned to another USDA insurance agency — the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation — for help in rebuilding their demolished homes and replanting their flattened crops.

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Trading Goods and Science With Our Friends Overseas

The world relies on U.S. farm exports. Japan is our top customer, buying more than \$8 billion in 1990; Canada came next, at \$4 billion; and Mexico and South Korea each bought \$2.6 billion in farm products from us that year.

In 1989-90, we provided 52 percent of the world's grain trade, nearly 70 percent of the corn, and more than 30 percent of the cotton. From abroad, we buy cocoa, coffee, and some fruits and nuts, as well as other items not produced in the United States.

Bags of American grain are unloaded in Pakistan. (USDA 92CS0527)





*Grain elevators at dock contain soybeans for loading into a ship in Calumet Harbor, Chicago, IL. American farmers grow about half the soybeans, worldwide.
(USDA 92CS0590)*

To make sure we neither import nor export environmentally unsafe agricultural products, USDA scientists study pests, insects, and animal diseases. They're trying to discover natural organisms that are sound alternatives to chemical control. One team of USDA scientists, for example, is now in Ecuador searching for rare plant species, including a potato that is naturally resistant to disease.



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Agriculture and the USDA: An Economic Powerhouse

Agriculture is a bigger business than defense or health care. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is transforming agriculture from a food and fiber business to the number one provider of new crops, new uses, and new markets.



Yew trees native to the Pacific Northwest. USDA scientists lead the fight against some cancers with the bark of the yew tree, which researchers are striving to duplicate in synthetic form. (USDA 90CS1858)

USDA Goes Forward to the Future

Current USDA projects include making crops a part of America's fuel sources, fighting cancer with the bark of the Pacific yew tree, debittering grapefruit juice, producing durable press cotton fabrics, and fighting cholesterol.



In Tunica, MS, catfish farming has expanded the traditional use of farmland.
(USDA 77CS0269)

Your Dollars at USDA

In this pamphlet, you've had a look at some of the people and programs, discoveries and goals of your USDA.

Here's how the actual USDA budget was sliced up for fiscal year 1991: Out of \$54.1 billion, more than half — some \$28.5 billion — went to social programs such as food stamps and nutrition assistance; \$7.5 billion was spent on rural development; \$10.1 billion on farm programs, \$3.0 billion on the Forest Service, \$2.7 billion on

conservation programs; \$1.4 billion on education and research; \$1.0 billion on marketing and inspections; \$ 0.8 billion on international programs; and about \$ 0.4 billion on miscellaneous expenditures.

(The individual figures add to \$55.4 billion. The Department receives \$1.3 billion in receipts from various activities. This figure is deducted to get to the bottom line total of \$54.1 billion.)

USDA Food and Poultry Hotline

Call from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.
Toll-free: 1-800-535-4555

In the Washington, DC, area:
202/720-3333.



USDA's Yearbook of Agriculture

USDA has published an annual yearbook since Abraham Lincoln established the Department in 1862. The 1992 issue, "New Crops, New Uses, New Markets," is available from:

Superintendent of Documents
United States Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
Telephone: 202/783-3238 for price
of individual copy.

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

The USDA's National Arboretum's Plant Hardiness Zone Map, a 4-by-4-foot color poster, shows average mean temperatures for growing regions throughout North America.

Price: \$6.50.
Order your map from:
Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
Phone: 202/783-3238

Closeup of baby chicks delivered to the farm of Maurice and Ann Layton of Magee, MS. (USDA 77CS0269)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Visitors Center

On Washington, DC's Metro subway system, take the Blue or Orange line to the Smithsonian stop, Mall exit. Enter the U.S. Department of Agriculture building on Thomas Jefferson Place on the Mall.

Open Weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Books, pamphlets, and videotapes available for sale to the public.

Phone: 202/720-2791.

A lone cowboy moves an Agricultural Research Service herd across range near Miles City, MT. (USDA ARS K-3908-5)





**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Office of
Public Affairs

Office of
Publishing
and Visual
Communication

PA-1503
Supersedes PA-824,

"Your United States
Department of
Agriculture... How
It Serves People
on the Farm, and in
the Community, Nation,
and World"

December 1992